

SWARM IN A WALL

If a swarm has chosen a wall cavity it does not matter where the entrance is, it will cluster at the top to begin building the nest.

1) Smoking

Probability of success: Poor

Make a hole in the cavity below the top, and pump in smoke. Smoke rises, so it will envelop the bees at the top of the cavity, and may encourage them to leave. Few homeowners have the patience to pursue so laborious and time-consuming a procedure with such a low likelihood of working. *BE AWARE:* The smell of smoke lingers for a long time because it contaminates clothing, furniture, curtains etc.

2) Buy 'GetRid'

Probability of success: Poor to Fair

'GetRid' is a euphemism for products sold to beekeepers to encourage bees to leave the supers when harvesting honey. The fumes are heavier than air so they must be introduced at the top of the cavity. These products work best for beekeepers in hot weather, the cooler the temperatures the poorer they work. *BE AWARE:* Some of these are putrid-smelling, and highly offensive to people as well as bees.

3) Buy moth crystals

Probability of success: Fair to Good

The active ingredient Paradichlorobenzene is offensive to bees. Make a sausage (from a pair of panty hose or mosquito netting and fill the end with the crystals. Size the sausage to suit a hole that will be cut at the top of the cavity, push the crystals in, and staple the end of the sausage to hold the crystals in place at the top of the cavity. The fumes are heavier than air, and since the bees are in the same area as the crystals they may be encouraged to depart. *BE AWARE:* Cutting a hole at the top of a cavity where bees are requires taking precautions against being stung.

4) Buy moth balls or call an exterminator

Not Recommended

The active ingredient Naphthalene is deadly to bees. Follow the same actions as above for crystals and the bees will die in the cavity. The decaying bodies of the bees will smell for a few days. This is not a recommended procedure but it is safer for the home inhabitants than pouring or spraying insecticide into the wall. Similarly, an exterminator will insert a poison dust into the cavity and seal the hole.

5) Call a live bee removalist

Probability of success: High

On a house, the least damage is caused by cutting open an interior wall, approximately 18" is removed from between the studs of the partition where the bees are. A bee vacuum can collect the bees safely, and what little comb has been built can be easily removed. Repair is straightforward for the homeowner, 2x2s can be positioned on the studs to provide a mount to screw the sheetrock back in place. A little spackle and paint will complete the process.

Free-standing exterior walls of stucco are a bigger problem, because it is difficult to be certain where the bees are located. The dampness absorbed by the stucco during winter dry rots the framing timber, so the wall becomes a single extended cavity. A grinder and diamond blade can be used to cut open the cavity. Repair is difficult for most homeowners, a contractor may be needed to repair the wall.

GENERAL RULE OF THUMB: Any cavity that bees have occupied should be stuffed with fiberglass batts before being sealed because bees are attracted to previous nesting locations. The original entry hole can be closed but bees are adept at finding other entry points. The insulation fills the space needed to build a nest.

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